

The Reality of Voluntary Work in University Libraries: A Case Study of the Central Library of Imam Abdul Rahman bin Faisal University

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to identify volunteer work in the Central Library in Al-Rayyan, where the case study approach was relied upon to describe the phenomenon, relying on a main tool, which is the checklist for collecting and interpreting data from the point of view of the researchers. The checklist was divided into 15 questions, each question aimed at achieving the goals that it seeks. The study reached several results, including: the diversity of volunteer opportunities for university employees in various library departments, limiting library volunteering to educational volunteering and no other sectors of volunteer work, adopting the national platform for volunteer work, good planning for volunteer work, and providing the volunteer with many skills. Communication, cooperation, and investment of time. When activating volunteer work, the library faces many challenges to achieve its goals. The study came out with several recommendations, including: opening volunteer fields for all specializations at the university and in various sectors, announcing the policies that govern volunteer work, and conducting studies aimed at measuring the impact of volunteer work on development. Self-skills and capabilities from the volunteers' point of view.

Keywords: Volunteering, volunteer, Skills Development, Community Service, National Volunteer Work Platform, university libraries, case study

INTRODUCTION

Volunteers today are the most important social resources that securing and maintaining them is important for the prosperity of society and increasing its awareness of such non-profit centers. Because libraries have a unique position, they contribute to developing the skills of volunteer students and contributing to the academic success of the library and developing and succeeding the skills of the volunteer person and leading to increasing the knowledge of people. Because the role of volunteers is important and deserves respect, it requires a clear role and policy for what volunteers do and do not do. We will mention and shed light on the work and research on volunteer

programs in libraries and their importance in acquiring the skills needed for volunteers to learn and work with them.

Study Problem

There is no doubt that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia adopts, through its directives, programs, development practices, indicators and role, its development and prosperity in various sectors such as the economy, health, etc.

Universities play as educational institutions in adopting modern trends in various fields, including the field of information science and related services, especially with regard to community services represented in volunteer work and its support for scientific research.

Hence, the problem of the study stems from monitoring the reality of volunteer work provided by the Central Library at Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University through its policy and regulations.

Importance of the Study

The study focus on the topic of volunteer work, in line with Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University's efforts to support the Kingdom's Vision and its role in promoting modern research trends in the field of information science. Its importance also stems from the religious dimension and social responsibility that encourage providing assistance to the community. Additional significance lies in the scarcity of local studies to the researchers' knowledge that address volunteer work in Saudi university libraries, particularly in terms of the policies regulating it. This highlights the urgent need for such a study to fill an existing knowledge gap in this vital field.

Study Objectives

- Identify the nature of volunteer work and the benefits gained.
- Highlight the status and importance of volunteer work.
- Identify the most important areas of Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University's support for volunteer work and the extent of its contribution to serving the community.
- Know the extent of the university community's awareness of volunteer work.
- Determine the extent of support of Saudi universities represented by Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University for volunteer work.

Study questions:

- What is volunteer work and what are its benefits gained?
- What is the status of volunteer work and what is its importance?
- What are the most important areas of support for Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University and the extent of its contribution to society?
- Knowing how to measure the extent of the university community's awareness of volunteer work?
- How much does Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University support volunteer work?

Study Methodology

Case study method: It is a method that goes through several sequential steps that help solve a specific problem or phenomenon.

Data Collection Tools

The researchers used a number of the following tools in this study to collect information:

- Paper and electronic sources: Paper and electronic sources were used to collect intellectual production.
- Checklist: A checklist was prepared divided into five axes, each axis divided into a number of questions aimed at achieving the study objectives, as the list was built based on literary readings on the subject and then reviewed and sent to the library official, Ms. Haya Al-Ghubaini (Appendix 1), (Appendix 2) to answer its axes and complete the research with sufficient accuracy and clarity.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

- Study (Thoits, 2001, 115), this study aimed to study the relationships between volunteer work in society and many aspects of subjective well-being: happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, sense of control over life, physical health, and depression. Before the effects of volunteer membership are more often investigated than their effects on volunteering, cross-sectional rather than longitudinal data are used, and when longitudinal, they focus on social causes rather than selection effects. Focusing solely on the consequences of volunteering ignores the origins of human agency. People with greater personal resources and better physical resources and mentally healthy people should be more likely to seek (or seek) community service. Thus, we examine both selection effects and social

causation. The results of this study show that volunteering actually benefits all six dimensions of well-being, and vice versa.

- John, 1995, 137, This study aimed to show that volunteering to help others solve community problems is more likely among members who emphasize these social concerns, especially among those who are socially involved in these volunteering, and volunteering is formed early and remains strong. Volunteering is targeted because this association depends on the interpretation of volunteering and the importance attached to repeated volunteering.

Theoretical Framework: Volunteer Work

Volunteer work is an integral part of the social and educational fabric of many universities around the world. University libraries, as centers of knowledge and learning, provide unique opportunities for students and community members to participate in volunteering. Volunteer work in these institutions not only enhances a sense of social responsibility but also contributes to developing individuals' skills and enhancing their professional experiences. Volunteers in university libraries can play multiple roles, from organizing resources to helping with guidance and academic support for other students. These activities not only benefit libraries, but also provide volunteers with opportunities to learn, build professional networks, and contribute to their university life in a fruitful and moral way. Based on the above and given the importance of the topic, researchers address the topic of volunteer work in university libraries.

The concept of volunteer work: Volunteering in language: what a person gives of himself and is not imposed (Hamza, 2021, 25).

It is defined as: the effort that an individual makes voluntarily by contributing and providing services without compensation. (Hamza, 2021, 25) Bahnassi defined it as the unpaid activity that individuals freely undertake to serve society and achieve humanitarian goals. (Bahnassi, 2022, 12)

The Wales Council defined volunteer work as: the expression of the citizen where it provides the community with effort, time and diversity in various forms and is not mandatory. (Hamza, 2021, 27) As for the concept of volunteer: the person who offers his effort and time in volunteer work without financial compensation. (Bahnassi, 2022, 13) Hamza defined it as the individual who represents human resources in the feeding process for various volunteer institutions through his multiple skills and experiences. (Hamza, 2021, 28)

The importance of volunteering for libraries: working and managing modern information sources

- By dealing with modern sources of information, people's efficiency will increase through volunteer work and that sometimes the efficiency and experience of volunteers is more than the efficiency and experience of information specialists.
- Through volunteer work, the efficiency of libraries will increase as they are sources of information and diversity of workers and will increase volunteer opportunities.
- Increasing the programming efficiency and dealing with electronics for specialists, which will increase the use of libraries, determine the needs of students and workers and meet the needs of the university community:
- By volunteers consisting of male and female students and faculty members, they know exactly what students need from sources to help them in their educational, cultural and recreational journey.
- Developing work and volunteer work: Through volunteer work, workers can understand the work and master it before working in the library, so they gain experience and expertise, and through that they can determine if they have an opportunity to work in libraries.
- Helps the library in fulfilling its mission through working in it and volunteering.
- Develops the capabilities of libraries to achieve the Kingdom's Vision 2030 so that our country is a country of culture and sophistication.
- Supporting and developing libraries through enrichment and proposals for development and improvement. (Zidan, 295, 2019)

THE OBJECTIVES OF VOLUNTEER WORK ARE DIVIDED INTO TWO SECTIONS

General Objectives

- Gathering material and moral energies so that work becomes an imposed work to a work available to everyone to work in and turns into a voluntary social work.
- Providing reasons for the progress of societies, entertainment and education and presenting them to apply for volunteer work.
- Filling the void and empty gaps and achieving sufficient competencies.

- Contributing to building an effective and aware generation. (Mohad, 2019, 849)
- Reduces the problems facing society.
- Reduces professional deficit.
- Developing the spirit of participation and cooperation in society.
- Accelerating development. (Hamza, 2021, 37)

Specific Objectives

- Discovering talents.
- Strengthening ties in the volunteer work place.
- Investing time in useful work.
- Refining and building personalities in a way that benefits them. (Green Crescent Society, 1, 2018)
- Satisfying the individual need to feel accomplished and successful.
- Obtaining a good position in society.
- Making friends in the community.
- Self-fulfilling. (Hamza, 2021, 38)

Types of Volunteer Work

Volunteer work is a voluntary effort made by individuals to serve the community without expecting financial compensation. The following are some types of volunteer work:

Social volunteering: includes working with needy groups in society, such as orphans, the elderly, or people with disabilities.

Health volunteering: includes helping in hospitals, health centers, or participating in health awareness and disease prevention campaigns.

Educational volunteering: involves providing educational support to students, such as private lessons, educational workshops, and literacy.

Environmental volunteering: is concerned with protecting and preserving the environment through activities such as planting trees, cleaning beaches, and raising awareness of the importance of sustainability.

Volunteering in emergencies and disasters: includes providing relief and assistance to those affected by natural disasters or crises. (Saeed, 2012)

Cultural volunteering: relates to preserving cultural heritage and participating in organizing cultural and artistic events.

Sports volunteering: includes organizing sports events or participating in training sports teams, especially for youth.

Technical volunteering: Providing technical expertise and assistance in developing technology projects for non-profits.

Legal volunteering: Providing free legal assistance to people who cannot afford legal advice.

International volunteering: Involving volunteer work in other countries, often within the framework of international development or relief programs.

All of these types of volunteer work contribute to building stronger and more cohesive communities, and provide volunteers with the opportunity to develop their skills and experience working in areas they may not be exposed to in their regular professional lives. (Al-Farsi, 2016)

Second: The Applied Aspect

Study community

An official letter (Appendix 2) was sent to the official in charge of the central library to help answer the list of references prepared for collecting data, which was divided into (5) axes, and each axis included a set of questions related to the axis as follows:

First axis Definition of volunteer work and its importance.

Second axis Skills and equipment required for an information specialist to provide volunteer opportunities.

Third axis Shedding light on the advantages and obstacles to the success of volunteer opportunities.

Fourth axis Strategies and motivations of volunteers for volunteer opportunities from the library's point of view.

Accordingly, the answers to the study questions were as follows:

(First axis) Definition of volunteer work and its importance, and accordingly several questions were directed as follows: -

First question: Volunteer opportunities provided by the library, the results of the interview and through the checklist that was delivered to the study library showed that there are a number of volunteer opportunities

announced by the library, and it was indicated that: The library provides a number of volunteer opportunities in various library works, in its various departments, classification, shelving, and the lending department.

Second question: The concept of volunteer work, the concept of volunteer work was defined by the library official "Haya Al-Ghabini" as: Providing assistance and making an effort with a will emanating from the person's self to participate in supporting others to achieve goals without financial compensation, and this is what was indicated by the mechanism of literary studies (Hamza, 2021, 25), which defined the concept of volunteer work: The effort that an individual makes voluntarily by contributing and providing services without compensation.

From the point of view of the researchers, they see that the concept of volunteer work is: Providing assistance to serve the community without compensation.

The third question: The importance of volunteer work, volunteer work has great importance in a number of fields, and its importance lies in the fact that it helps the volunteer gain a number of experiences and skills in a large number of fields, in addition to raising the level of self-esteem of the volunteer, and it also helps in societal growth and development, which is what was indicated in the literary studies (Hamza, 2021, 33), which showed the importance of volunteer work in a number of points, namely:

- Satisfying the desires of others.
- Development and awareness of the importance of teamwork.
- Sense and responsibility.
- Acquiring social abilities and skills.
- Acquiring additional skills that increase the opportunity to acquire work.

The fourth question: Types of volunteer work, the library official "Haya Al-Ghabini" indicated that the library relies on providing "educational" volunteer opportunities, as it is a "university" library.

The researchers agree with the library's response to the question of providing special volunteer opportunities for female graduates, which contributes significantly to their bearing of responsibility and developing their leadership abilities, as indicated by many literary studies (Al-Farsi, 2016), on the subject of providing various volunteer opportunities in many fields such as:

- Social volunteering: includes working with needy groups in society, such as orphans, the elderly, or people with disabilities.
- Health volunteering: includes helping in hospitals, health centers, or participating in health awareness and disease prevention campaigns.
- Educational volunteering: represents providing educational support to students, such as private lessons, educational workshops, and literacy.
- Environmental volunteering: is concerned with protecting and preserving the environment through activities such as planting trees, cleaning beaches, and raising awareness of the importance of sustainability.
- Volunteering in emergencies and disasters: includes providing relief and assistance to those affected in cases of natural disasters or crises. (Saeed, 2012)
- Cultural volunteering: relates to preserving cultural heritage and participating in organizing cultural and artistic events.
- Sports volunteering: This includes organizing sports events or participating in training sports teams, especially for young people.
- Technical volunteering: This involves providing technical expertise and helping to develop technology projects for non-profits.
- Legal volunteering: This provides free legal assistance to people who cannot afford legal advice.
- International volunteering: This includes volunteer work in other countries, often within the framework of international development or relief programs.

These types of volunteer work contribute to building stronger and more cohesive communities, and provide volunteers with the opportunity to develop their skills and experience working in areas that they may not be exposed to in their normal professional lives.

(Second axis) The skills and equipment required for an information specialist to provide volunteer opportunities, and accordingly several questions were asked, as follows: -

Fifth question: The skills required for an information specialist, there are a number of skills that the specialist must possess, namely: the knowledge base of information science, which is based on previous experience.

The researchers add some skills that the volunteer must possess, namely: flexibility in work, in addition to work and developing self-competencies, and developing them through workshops and training courses that make him an information specialist with sufficient experience, and this is confirmed by literary studies (Al-Kamishi, 2021), which identified these characteristics in the following points:

1. Identifying those deficiencies in performance.
2. Identifying new ideas and the needs of beneficiaries.

3. Training on the use of electronic sources.
4. Analyzing information and presenting it to the beneficiary.

Question Six: The preparations made by the library to activate university volunteering, the library seeks to activate the role of volunteer work for the university community, by providing a number of preparations, with the provision of library facilities for practicing volunteer work, and it also provides a number of volunteer opportunities through the national platform for volunteer work, according to the tasks required of the volunteer.

Question Seven: Communication channels with university members to announce volunteer opportunities, the library has provided many services in order to communicate and announce with members of the university community, about the availability of volunteer opportunities at the university, and this is done through the coordinator of the national platform for volunteering, which is affiliated with the Library Affairs Department in coordination with the Community Service Department at the university.

(Third axis) Shedding light on the advantages and obstacles to the success of volunteer opportunities, and accordingly several questions were directed as follows: -

Question Eight: Characteristics of volunteer opportunity providers in the library, the results of the study indicated that there are several characteristics that volunteer opportunity providers in the library must possess, most notably the initiative in providing and making volunteer opportunities available, and bearing work pressures, cooperation, leadership and time management in addition to solving problems.

From the researchers' point of view, we see that the service desired by the beneficiary will be obtained quickly, through the employee's response to the beneficiary in providing that service to him quickly.

Question Nine: Difficulties faced when activating volunteer work, there are a number of difficulties facing volunteers, from the point of view of the library specialist, which are:

- Lack of discipline by the volunteer represents an obstacle to achieving the outcomes of volunteer opportunities.
- Failure to complete tasks in the required manner.
- Failure to adhere to the policies and rules of the institution.
- Failure to adhere to instructions and directives.
- Violation of professional ethics.

The researchers add to this the lack of credibility in the work, in addition to the negligence in the work assigned to him.

(The fourth axis) Strategies and motivations of the volunteer from the volunteer opportunities from the library's point of view, and accordingly several questions were directed as follows: -

Question ten: Factors for the success of volunteer opportunities, there are factors that make volunteer work opportunities successful, in terms of timing that is convenient for the volunteer in conjunction with the time of university buses, and this is what was indicated in the mechanism of literary studies (Hamza, 2021, 47-48), which identified a number of factors, namely:

- That the tasks are clear and prominent.
- That the activities that the volunteer will perform are specified.
- Accuracy.
- Respect and appreciation among everyone.
- Representation of goals.
- Defining all needs.
- Correct and good planning for work.
- Availability of all elements.
- Focus on field work.
- Flexibility in providing and providing alternatives.
- Reliance on scientific research methods.
- Awareness of the importance of training.

Question 11: Methods and approaches followed to ensure the success of volunteer work opportunities. To answer this topic, the methods and approaches to the success of volunteer work opportunities were linked to the type of professional practice in the library, as the period of volunteer work opportunities should be a semester, not a month, as stipulated by the National Platform for Volunteer Work. In addition to the volunteer certificate, the volunteer is granted a certificate of experience certified and stamped by the University's Training and Development Department when he/she completes the volunteer work opportunity efficiently and during which he/she has provided the library with a service or development idea. Al-Farsiyya (2016) pointed out the methods and approaches to ensuring volunteer work opportunities as follows:

1. Defining goals.
2. Planning.

3. Implementation.
4. Evaluation and improvement.

Question 12: Conditions that must be met by the volunteer. There are a number of conditions that must be met by the volunteer in order to provide him with this opportunity and serve the community, namely that he be serious in his work, and have a motivation to accomplish the assigned tasks, in addition to the love of learning and development, and this is what was indicated by the mechanism of literary studies (Hamza, 2021, 30) which identified a number of conditions, namely:

1. Sufficient time.
2. Possessing a number of skills and capabilities.
3. Desire for the community's intensity without compensation.
4. Taking responsibility.

The researchers add to that: Accomplishing work at the required time, patiently performing the work.

Question 13: Motives for volunteer work, and the results of the study reached several motives for volunteer work, in that it gains the individual new experiences, and investing time in what is beneficial to society, in addition to achieving psychological satisfaction for those who love giving and giving, and this is what (Hamza, 2021, 41) indicated in the study to some of the motives achieved:

- The desire for the individual to spend his time freely.
- Wants to give back to the organization.
- Feel responsible.
- Satisfy personal and social desires.
- Wants to gain new experiences and skills.
- Wants to gain respect.
- Human factors.
- National affiliation.
- Ideological factors.
- Altruism: As the person loves to help the community.
- Investing free time.
- Getting pleasure while doing work.
- Religious factors.

Question Fourteen: The personal and social benefits that a volunteer can achieve, there are benefits for the volunteer from a personal and social perspective, as this helps him achieve psychological satisfaction, and that he is an effective member of society, and literary studies (Bahnassi, 2022) have indicated a number of benefits:

- Promoting social justice: Volunteer work contributes to promoting social justice by providing assistance and support to individuals and communities in need. It works to reduce social gaps and improve living conditions for marginalized groups.
- Promoting communication and cooperation: Volunteer work provides an environment for communication and cooperation between volunteers and the local community. Positive interaction is encouraged and cooperation is promoted to achieve common goals, which leads to strengthening social ties and building strong and cohesive communities.
- Developing skills and abilities: Volunteer work provides an opportunity for volunteers to develop their skills and abilities. They gain new experiences and learn different skills, which enhances their personal and professional capabilities, and this enables them to achieve greater success in their personal and professional lives.

Question 15: The library benefits from volunteer efforts. A question was directed to the library regarding the extent of the benefit achieved by the library from providing volunteer opportunities. The answers were as follows:

- Contributing to the development of societies through its university members.
- Raising the level of cooperative and organizational values of the university community.
- Raising the level of digital knowledge and skills when dealing with the systems and programs provided by the library.
- Mastering the skill of writing reports and using programs in their presentation.
- Gaining the skill of problem solving and time management.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research came out with several results, which are:

- Adopting the national platform for volunteer work.
- Diversifying volunteer opportunities for university members in various library departments.
- The period of volunteer work in the library is one semester.
- Limiting volunteer work in the library to university members.

- Good planning for volunteer work.
- Providing the volunteer with a number of communication, cooperation and time investment skills.
- When activating volunteer work, the library faces many challenges to achieve its goals.

As for the recommendations

Based on the results of the study; Several recommendations are recommended to reach a brighter future in the field of volunteer work in university libraries:

- Continue to announce volunteer plans and work clearly through the communication platforms provided by the library to university members.
- Open a field for volunteering and achieve participation with multiple experiences and skills for various disciplines.
- Provide guidance and training programs focused on the importance and values of religious and societal volunteer work.
- Develop societal skills and values and enhance national identity among university members in general and students of the Information Science program in particular and employ them in the field of volunteer work.
- Increase the role of the information specialist in the field of volunteer work in a manner that suits the nature of volunteers.
- Provide volunteer opportunities during the annual summer vacation so that female students can participate in volunteer work.

Finally, the study recommends preparing research and studies on the subject of volunteer work from various angles and directions to serve information institutions in all their activities.

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